

Trump Tests Separation of Powers and Constitution

• By Mary Alice Miller

When Donald Trump said he would be a dictator on his first day in office, apparently, he wasn't joking. Among the scores of executive orders he signed on Inauguration Day were challenges to the U.S. Constitution and legislation passed by both Houses of Congress and signed into law.

Trump is testing the limits of his presidential authority. With an eye to the conservative majority Supreme Court, Trump might believe that any lawsuits challenging his executive orders would be decided in his favor.

The 14th Amendment, which granted birthright citizenship to former chattel slaves and their descendants and all people born in the U.S., invalidated the 1857 Dred Scott decision, which ruled that Black people, enslaved or free, were not citizens of the United States and, therefore could not sue in federal courts.

Trump's executive order invalidating birthright citizenship related to undocu-

mented immigrants comes dangerously close to erasing and outcome of the Civil War for African American citizens, too.

Trump signed an executive order extending a ban on TikTok for 75 days to give his administration time to address the app's national security concerns. Bipartisan legislation remains in place that would fine companies like Apple and Google if they help users access the app.

Pursuant to Trump's anti-DEI executive orders, in an internal memo from the Office of Management and Budget ordered a pause on all grants and loans disbursed by the federal government. The pause meant to align federal funding to Trump's agenda of "ending DEI, the Green New Deal, and funding nongovernmental organizations that undermine the national interest."

The impact was immediate, sparking mass confusion. New York was among many states locked out of the Medicaid reimbursement funding system. NYS receives over \$55 billion in Medicaid and

about \$400 billion in overall federal funding annually.

The White House assured the country that the spending pause would not impact direct funds to individuals, including SNAP, social security, and student loans.

It was unclear how the OMB directive would impact other federal funding, such as shelters, housing subsidies, transit, and health and social programs. It would have defunded the police.

NYS Attorney General Letitia James led a multi-state coalition challenging Trump's order in federal court. "We are seeking a temporary restraining order and then a preliminary injunction against this illegal act. It exceeds the authority of the president of the United States. It is a violation of the spending clause. The United States Congress has control over the purse," said James. "This president of the United States cannot disrespect the co-equal branch of government with a stroke of a pen."

A federal judge has issued a temporary restraining order on Trump's pause on federal funding until Monday Feb. 3.

On Wednesday, the OMB withdrew its pause on federal funding.

In December 2024, Congress passed, and Biden signed a bill to temporarily extend funding for the federal government to avert a government shutdown. The agreement extends federal funding until March 14, 2025, and includes disaster relief funding. It did not include an extension to the debt ceiling.

The Trump executive order banning diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives on the federal level put all federal employees in DEI positions on paid leave and required all federal agencies to submit a written plan to shut the programs down. Federal workers received an email that threatened consequences for any employee who did not report on co-workers who worked in DEI roles, which may go

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NEWS BRIEFS

New York Attorney General Letitia James Initiates Legal Action Against President on Halting Federal Grants and Loans

New York Attorney General Letitia James has initiated legal action against the Trump administration following its recent directive to halt federal grants and loans. This move, announced on January 27, 2025, by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), aimed to pause disbursements to reassess funding priorities. The freeze excluded programs like Social Security and Medicare but led to widespread confusion and concern. Attorney General James criticized the administration's action as "reckless and dangerous," emphasizing that "programs in communities across the entire nation depend on this funding to support our families." She further stated, "Not only does this administration's new policy put people at risk, but it is plainly unconstitutional." In her lawsuit, James is joined by attorneys general from multiple states, including California, Illinois, and New Jersey, aiming to ensure the continuation of essential services.

NAACP President Condemns DEI Rollback in Federal Government

NAACP President Derrick Johnson released the following statement condemning President Trump's Executive Order Rolling Back DEI in the Federal Government: "It is outrageous that the President is rolling back critical Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs. DEI programs help ensure that everyone can prosper. It's clear that President Trump does not value equal opportunity. His appalling executive order will only worsen America's racial hierarchy and benefit the oligarch class. This executive order threatens public services that benefit all Americans; it's an attempt to consolidate power and money to a few wealthy individuals. And poor and working-class people will pay the price. This is all part of a calculated strategy to redefine the role of government, privatize essential public services, and further discrimination. Elections have consequences and it's clear that this election has put a target on Black America's back."

View
continued from cover

like being able to cut the alarms so that the corruption can take place unimpeded right down the line. They're going tie us up in paperwork and rob us blind.

This is particularly dangerous for Black folks, and it is best that we pay attention. White Male Supremacy is reestablishing itself in America. With the "freeze" put on the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department and the anti-DEI directives, White supremacists are doing what they

Trump Eliminates Help for Black and Latino Communities Hit Harder by Pollution

During the Biden administration, the Environmental Protection Agency made environmental justice one of its biggest priorities, working to improve health conditions in heavily-polluted communities often made up largely of Black, Latino and low-income Americans. Under Trump, it is over. He has eliminated a team of White House advisors whose job it was to ensure the entire federal government helped communities located near heavy industry, ports and roadways. The "Justice40" initiative under the Biden administration required 40 percent of the benefits from certain environmental programs go to hard-hit communities. Now, when the government reviews new facilities now, experts say officials are likely to ignore how any pollution they create may exacerbate what communities already experience.

Federal Government Jobs Historically Helps Black Middle Class Grow

"The federal government's personnel policies have helped expand and sustain a Black middle class," wrote Jarvis DeBerry on MSNBC. The Center for American Progress' 2020 report, stated "the federal government has hired Black Americans at higher rates than the private sector going back a century or more." The federal workforce from military to post office to offices is disproportionately Black. Firing federal workers en masse would still disproportionately hurt Black people. Marcus Board, a Howard University political science professor, told Washington's NBC affiliate, "They have worker protections, federal worker protections, that are guaranteed by the federal government, and so it's one of the few places where they can be sure that they're going to be supported, protected and taken care of." DeBerry writes "attacks on the federal government as an attack on Black Americans, specifically the Black middle class."

have always done—everything they can to prevent African Americans from prospering, while at the same time making life difficult for those others who are not white, male and single-gendered.

I believe things will change for the better when the full effects of the administration's actions begin to take hold on the MAGA base. When prices go up, and they can't access health care or childcare, the threats to Republican politicians will switch from supporting the agenda to stopping this man.

Op-Ed New Year, New You!

Dr. Sandra Scott, Interim CEO, One Brooklyn Health

Every year, we make resolutions to achieve a goal or make impactful changes in our lives, but the most important resolution is taking control of our health. That starts with ensuring we schedule our annual physicals, including early detection screenings necessary to maintain our overall health and well-being. Screenings allow your physician to assess your risk factors and offer guidance regarding lifestyle changes relative to preventing chronic conditions. Recommended screenings will vary depending on age, family history, and gender. However, blood pressure screening and cardiovascular evaluations are key to minimizing complications.

Blood pressure screening can help determine your risk for hypertension which can lead to stroke, heart attack, or heart failure, to name a few.

Hypertension is known as the silent killer and can go unnoticed for a very long time. Conditions such as diabetes, obesity, and thyroid illness can also lead to hypertension, so screenings such as blood glucose, Body Mass Index and thyroid function testing can also be a critical part of your annual health assessment. Nearly half of adults (47%) in the United States suffer from hypertension. However, African Americans have the highest rates of severe hypertension compared to other racial groups and often develop the condition earlier in life. This is due to diet, social determinants, and access to adequate health care.

Uncontrolled hypertension is also a leading risk factor for cardiovascular disease, which is the leading cause of death in the United States. The risk of certain cardiovascular diseases may increase by smoking, alcohol consumption, and lack of exercise.

Other vital screenings include prostate cancer screening for men and cervical cancer screening for women. Black men have the highest instances of prostate cancer, therefore, screening is recommended as early as 40-45 years of age. Hispanic

women have the highest rates of cervical cancer, while Black women have the highest overall mortality rates for cervical cancer. Screening for cervical cancer is conducted via Pap test, HPV test, or both and recommended annually starting at 21 years old.

While annual screenings are essential, lifestyle modifications are key to controlling your health outcomes, especially hypertension and cardiovascular health. Things such as maintaining a healthy weight through a balanced diet and regular exercise, reducing salt intake to less than 1500mg a day, getting at least 7 hours of sleep, and reducing stress are pivotal.

One Brooklyn Health (OBH) is here to help you start your wellness journey. As an integrated health system, we provide the highest quality and widest breadth of healthcare services available throughout central Brooklyn. OBH has an extensive network of primary care, behavioral health, and specialty care locations to provide care close to your home. It's a new year, and a healthier you starts with us! For more information about primary care services or health screenings, please visit us at www.onebrooklynhealth.org.

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